

## **Head Start State Collaboration Offices: Information to Inform Planning in the Priority Areas**

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- 1. School Transitions:** Head Start State Collaboration Offices (HSSCOs) will foster seamless transitions and long-term success of Head Start children by promoting continuity of services between the Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework and state early learning standards including pre-k entry assessment and interoperable data systems.

Activities of collaboration offices include, but are not limited to:

- Linking Head Start agencies with state-based Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) providers to facilitate the alignment of Head Start agencies' curricula and assessments with the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework* and, as appropriate, with state early-learning standards and Kindergarten curricula.
- Expanding partnerships with local education agencies, including pre-kindergarten and transition-to-kindergarten programs;
- Enhancing the capacity of Head Start agencies to provide services to dual language learners and their families, and to promote and support appropriate curricula for limited English children;
- Consulting with chief state school officers to foster understanding of Head Start comprehensive services, align curricula and assessments, and promote partnerships between Head Start and local educational agencies;
- Fostering working relationships between Head Start grantees, local education agencies, and child care programs to establish comprehensive transition policies

and practices that meet the needs of children, including children with disabilities and children experiencing homelessness;

- Promoting Head Start–pre-k partnerships and facilitating the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) to increase the number of low-income children who receive Head Start comprehensive services and family support;
- Enhancing linkages that support Head Start grantees as they move to evidence-based curricula and assessment, and implement early math, literacy, and science throughout the curriculum; and
- Increasing the capacity of Head Start grantees to collaborate with local museums, public and school libraries, and other resources to provide learning experiences for Head Start children.

**2. Professional Development:** HSSCOs will collaborate with institutions of higher education to promote professional development through education and credentialing programs for early childhood providers in states.

Activities of collaboration offices include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting the work of state T/TA providers in their work with Head Start agencies to enable them to meet the Head Start degree requirements for teachers, assistant teachers, education managers and other staff as described in section 648A(a)(2)(A);
- Assisting to connect Head Start agencies with higher education agencies that provide distance learning programs;
- As a member of the State Advisory Council, supporting the Council’s efforts to promote and enhance state-level planning, policy development, and implementation to create a state-wide professional development system that includes inter-institutional articulation agreements and credit for life experiences; and
- Connecting and working with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal colleges and universities, Hispanic/Latino service institutions, and other higher education institutions to increase the number of Head Start teachers, assistant teachers and education managers who meet the Head Start required specifications

**3. Child Care and Early Childhood Systems:** HSSCOs will coordinate activities, referrals, and resources with the state agency responsible for the state Child and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) program and resource and referral, to make full-working day and full-calendar year child care services available to children. They will also include the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* in state efforts to rate the quality of programs (Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)) and support Head Start programs when participating in QRIS and partnering with child care and early childhood systems at the local level.

Activities of collaboration offices include, but are not limited to:

- Promoting collaboration between state education agencies and state child care licensing agencies to improve the standards of quality and reduce regulatory barriers facing early childhood programs, and encouraging the inclusion of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* in state efforts to rate the quality of programs (often QRIS);
- Supporting Head Start programs participation in state efforts to rate the quality of programs;
- Building linkages between Head Start, local child care resource and referral agencies, and the state child care agency (CCDBG);
- Ensuring collaboration between Head Start agencies and local child care programs to ensure that quality, full-working day and full-calendar year services are available to children and families who need them;
- Facilitating Head Start involvement in child care quality improvement and licensing initiatives;
- Collaborating with state child care administrators to build capacity in child care agencies for quality infant toddler care through linkages with Head Start professional development and curriculum development;
- Promoting interoperability between the Head Start data system(s) and those of state preschool and k-12 systems that includes the assignment of unique State Assigned Student Identifiers (SASIDs) that remain with students throughout their pre-k-12 public education so that Head Start participants can be included in state data collection efforts, longitudinal studies, and tracking systems to demonstrate sustainable educational outcomes; and
- Promoting the inclusion of the *Head Start Program Performance Standards* in state QRIS standards to support state system building efforts and eliminate duplicative and burdensome requirements. The Office of Head Start (OHS) will provide documentation that local programs can use to participate in a state's QRIS.

4. **Regional Office Priorities:** HSSCOs will support other regional office priorities such as family and community partnerships; health, mental health, and oral health; disabilities; and support to military families. Other special OHS and ACF initiative requests for HSSCO support should be routed through the OHS Regional Offices.

**Regional office priorities may include:**

**Health Services:** To promote access to timely health care services, including general health, oral health, and mental health services.

- Partner with state Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems and other state-wide health initiatives to ensure that low income children receive comprehensive health services;
- Facilitate the expansion of integrated nutrition and physical activity programs, such as *I am Moving, I am Learning*, into curriculum of Head Start grantees and daily experiences for children birth to five;
- Play an active role in implementing OHS Dental Homes Initiative by serving on state leadership teams to ensure all Head Start children have a dental home;
- Promote partnerships to ensure all eligible children receive the full range of Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) services through Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), community clinics, and private providers, and that all necessary follow-up is completed for physical, mental, and oral health;
- Enhance state partnerships with Health Services Advisory Committees to ensure all children are enrolled in health insurance, including Medicaid and CHIP;
- Facilitate the development of contingency plans within Head Start agencies for coping with sick staff and sick children to avoid the spread of illnesses;
- Promote partnerships to support the unique needs of Early Head Start grantees through linkages with community services such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), La Leche League, Public Health Nursing, and others;
- Assisting Head Start agencies that serve pregnant women to identify community resources that provide prenatal and post-partum education and care, including mental health services; and
- Linking Head Start grantees with state and regional representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to promote joint initiatives such as *Care for Their Air* and *Play it Safe* to protect children from environmental hazards such as second and third hand smoke, asthma triggers, pests, and pesticides.

**Services to Children who are Experiencing Homelessness:** To support access to services for children and families experiencing homelessness through coordination with state and local education agencies implementing McKinney-Vento requirements.

- Improve coordination between Head Start agencies and state and local McKinney-Vento coordinators or directors;
- Promote partnerships that support Head Start agencies in addressing barriers to serving children and families experiencing homelessness;
- Enable partnerships between Head Start agencies, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuums of Care networks, and state homeless education directors; and
- Assist Head Start state-based T/TA providers to coordinate the needs of Head Start agencies and the community to strengthen practices for serving children and families experiencing homelessness.

**Services to Children with Disabilities:** To increase opportunities for children with disabilities.

- Work with the State Interagency Coordinating Councils established under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to promote policies and practices that support the effective inclusion of Head Start and Early Head Start children with disabilities;
- Collaborate with organizations in Head Start's T/TA network to coordinate activities and resources for children with disabilities and their families;
- Facilitate the inclusion of Head Start representatives, including representatives from American Indian/Alaska Native and Migrant grantees operating in their states, on state-wide interagency activities addressing the needs of low-income children with disabilities;
- Encourage the coordination and participation of local Head Start personnel in the state's child identification efforts (Child Find) and other early identification activities; and
- Facilitate coordination between Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, local Education Agencies (LEAs), and Part C/Early Identification for approaches that promote the timely referral, evaluation, and transition of children from Head Start into elementary school in accordance with federal, state and local requirements.

**Child Welfare:** To improve or enhance coordination with child welfare services, including foster care and child protective services.

- Assist Head Start grantees to improve local coordination with child welfare;
- Help Head Start grantees align child welfare parent involvement goals with Head Start parent engagement goals, including self-sufficiency;
- Partner with the Children's Bureau's *Improving Child Welfare Outcomes through Systems of Care* grant initiative;
- Link Head Start grantees to local agencies implementing the *Strengthening Families* initiative; and
- Facilitate linkages between home-visiting programs, such as nurse-family partnerships, and home-based Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

Family and Community Partnerships may include:

**Family Literacy:** To promote and support state and local connections that enhance family literacy.

- Promote understanding of Head Start's definition of family literacy among Head Start grantees;
- Coordinate financial literacy opportunities using existing community or state resources and programs, including the adult education system and/or local financial institutions;
- Work with the state adult education system to improve coordination at the local level;
- Facilitate collaboration with state and donors agencies to provide Head Start children with books to own and use at home;
- Ensure Head Start representation in state-wide initiatives to develop or improve literacy curriculums for caregivers;
- Assist with coordination of state-based T/TA system initiatives to increase family literacy with needs of Head Start grantees; and
- Facilitate coordination between Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, LEAs, and Part C/Early Identification for approaches that promote the timely referral, evaluation, and transition of children from Head Start into elementary school in accordance with Federal, state, and local requirements.

**Welfare:** To encourage and support collaboration with welfare systems (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program).

- Assist Head Start grantees to secure TANF information needed to identify and recruit children eligible for Head Start;
- Assist Head Start grantees in developing partnerships with welfare agencies and employers to provide appropriate training and employment opportunities for Head Start parents;
- Facilitate collaboration between Head Start agencies and the welfare system to provide flexibility for Head Start parents as they move along the continuum of education, training, and part-time employment to full-time employment; and
- Develop partnerships to broaden the availability of training for Head Start family services staff and entry level training for welfare recipients who wish to enter the early childhood field.

**Community Services:** To promote and support full utilization of relevant community services, including public schools, public libraries, museums, and law enforcement agencies, and promote effective outreach efforts to Head Start-eligible families.

- Assist Head Start agencies in developing public and private partnerships to increase and coordinate resources for Head Start and other early childhood programs;

- Serve as the state point of contact for agencies and planners seeking information about Head Start policies, procedures, and services;
- Assist Head Start agencies to establish partnerships with local service agencies and volunteer organizations to build or increase their capacity;
- Provide for Head Start representation on state and local planning and policy boards related to services for low-income families;
- Through the regional offices, assisting Head Start grantees in planning and coordinating with relevant local entities for emergency preparedness;
- Increase the capacity of Head Start grantees to collaborate with local museums, public and school libraries, and other resources to provide learning experiences for Head Start children;
- Promote partnerships between Head Start agencies and law enforcement, relevant community-based organizations, and substance abuse and mental health agencies to reduce the impact on child development of substance abuse, child abuse, and domestic violence;
- Expand the capacity of Head Start agencies to collaborate with private and public entities to effectively recruit eligible children and families to Head Start, such as linking Head Start programs with state Public Radio initiatives to reach low income families.

**Military Families:** To promote outreach by Head Start grantees to military families whose children do not have access to quality early childhood services when located away from military installations.